

EVALUATION OF COMMERCIAL USE OF TEDs

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The U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, in cooperation with the shrimp industry, initiated a TED Evaluation Program in the spring of 1988. The overall objective of the program is to determine the effects of commercial utilization of certified TEDs on commercial shrimp trawlers in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The program is aimed at determining catch rates of shrimp for TED-equipped trawls and trawls without TEDs in selected shrimp fishing areas of the southeast region.

The U.S. Federal Government implemented mandatory use of TEDs in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic in 1988. However, the state of Louisiana sued the Federal Government and the courts upheld the regulation. The U.S. Congress revised the date of implementation to 1 May 1989 for all except the Cape Canaveral, Florida, area.

Trained observers have been placed on shrimp vessels operating off of the states of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. Through 1988, trained observers have collected information on 39 trips from commercial vessels fishing for 2750 hours. The difference of catch rates of shrimp between TED and standard nets have varied by area and season ranging from a loss of 37% to a gain of up to 38%. Three turtles have been caught in the Gulf of Mexico and 17 in the South Atlantic, all in the non-TED nets.